A Solemne Paſsion of the Soules Loue.

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A ſolemne Paſsion of the Soules Loue.

AWake, my ſoule, out of the ſleepe of ſinne,
And ſhake off ſlouth the ſubiect of thy ſhame,
Search out the way how beſt thou maieſt beginne
To holy worke thine humble will to frame:
Then proue not weary of a little paine,
When fleſhes griefe will breede the ſpirits gaine.

Confeſſe thy ſelfe vnworthy of the ſence,
To learne the leaſt of the ſupernall will,
Beſeech the heauens in ſtrength of their defence,
To ſaue and keepe thee from infernall ill:
Then fall to worke that all the world may ſee,
The ioyfull loue betwixt thy God and thee.

Tell of his goodnes how he did create thee,
And in his iuſtice, how he doth correct thee,
And in his loue, how he will neuer hate thee,
And that his mercy neuer will reiect thee:
And how he helpt thee when the world diſtreſt thee,
And with his graces how he ſweetly bleſt thee.

Say, I was ſicke, and he did ſend me health,
I vvas in priſon, and he ſet me free,
And I vvas poore, and he did ſend me wealth,
And I vvas blinde, and he did make me ſee:
I vvas perplext, and he did heale my paine,
And being dead, he gaue me life againe.

VVhen I was lame, he did my limmes reſtore,
VVhen I vvas deafe, he made me heare his voice,
VVhen I vvas vvounded, he did heale my ſore,
VVhen I vvas ſad, he made my ſoule reioice:
VVhen I had ſind, he would not yet forſake me,
VVhen I vvas loſt, he did to mercy take me.

To

To say yet more, what he hath done for me,
I needes must say, his goodnes hath no ende,
Who, when on earth he saw no friend to me,
Did make me feele I had a heauenly friend:
A heauenly friend whose helpe doth faile me neuer,
But is my comfort, and my king for euer.

This is my Lord, my life, and all my loue,
My liuing Loue, and louing life indeede,
This is the blessing of my best behoue,
The sacred fruit whereon I sweetely feede:
This is the ioy that makes my heart to sing,
Honour and glory to my heauenly king.

Oh king more glorious than the world can know thee!
From whom the day, euen from on high doth spring,
Where glorious works vnto the world doe shew thee,
Oh glorious loue the euerliuing king:
The king of life, in whom the soule doth proue,
The highest glory of the heauenly Loue.

By whose high hands were all things made at first,
By whose deepe wisedome they are gouernd still,
By whom alone, are blessed or accurst,
That loue his word, or disobay his will:
By whose sweete breath they liue that do attend him,
And by whose wrath they die that doe offend him.

For who can bide the fury of his yre?
Or halfe conceiue the comfort of his loue?
Who plagues his foes with an infernall fire,
And plants his seruants in the heauens aboue:
Who shakes the heauens, & makes the mountains bow
If he but once begin to knit the brow.

And where he loues, what will he leaue to doe,
To make the soule acquainted with his kindnes?
And with what ioy will he the spirit wooe,
To shun the woes that grow of worldly blindnes?
What paine, or griefe, or death did he refuse,
To saue their liues that he did sweetely chuse?

Now for the greatnes of his glorious power,
He is almighty and all glorie his,
He made the yeare, the month, day, night and hower,
The heauens, earth, ſea, and vvhat in them there is:
In him alone doth all their being ſtand,
And liue or die in his almighty hand.

He ſpake the vvord, and by his vvord they vvere,
And all vvas good his ſecret vviſedome did,
His vvill did vvorke his fauour vvithout feare,
And not a thought is from his knowledge hid:
He knowes the hearts, & ſearcheth through the raines
And ſees the roots euen of the ſmalleſt vaines.

Hee deckt the Skye with ſunne & moone & ſtarres,
And made the ſeas to flowe vpon the ſand,
Vpon whoſe ſhore his hand did ſet the barres,
They ſhall not paſſe to ouerflowe the Land.
Amid the ayre he hath diſpearſt the Clowdes,
And onely man within his mercy ſhrowdes.

Within the depth the fiſh their holes doe keepe,
And in the rocks the Conny makes his houſe,
Into the earth the crawling wormes doe creepe,
And hollowe rocks are harbour for the mouſe:
The Lion keepes his den, the bird his neſt,
And man alone doth but in mercy reſt.

Yet theſe and all are guided by his power,
And may not paſſe the paſſage he hath giuen them,
The ſun his courſe, the Moone muſt know her houre,
And clouds muſt wander but where winds haue driuen
Beaſts know their times, & fiſhes know their tides, (thē
And man alone in onely mercie bides.

To tell of vvonders by his vviſedome vvrought,
Euen from the greateſt to the very leaſt,
Which time declares by true experience taught,
In fiſh, and foule, in bird, in man and beaſt:
Marke but the power, that doth in each abide,
And howe it vveakens in their higheſt pride.

The Lyon firſt is fearefull of the Bee,
The Elephant doth dread the little mouſe,
A crovving Cocke the Dragon may not ſee,
The ſtouteſt Eagle ſubiect to the louſe:
The greateſt Oxe a little taint vvorme killeth,
And many a man a little Canker ſpilleth.

Yet is the Lyon feared for his force,
The Elephant a huge and mighty beaſt,
The fiery Dragon kills without remorſe,
And Eagles carry lambes vnto their neſt:
The Oxe the taint vvorme vnder foote doth tread,
And man ſometimes doth kill the Cankers head.

But vvhen that power begins to gather pride,
Then ſee the ſtrength of the almighty hand,
By vvhoſe high helpe the vveakeſt thinges are tride,
To ſpoile the ſtrength vvherein the ſtrongeſt ſtand:
That they may knovv there is a power on hie,
In vvhom they liue, and at his pleaſure die.

To ſhewe examples of the heauenly might,
Againſt the pride of the inferieur power,
The vvord of truth doth giue a glorious light,
Where may be ſeene in minute of an houre: (ded,
How greateſt ſtates that on their ſtrength were grou-
With headlong fals vvere vtterly confounded.

How Pharaoh firſt, the proud Egyptian king,
That vvould not ſuffer Iſrael to paſſe,
What plagues and griefes did the almighty bring,
Vpon the houſe, euen vvhere his lodging vvas!
Frogges, flies, and lice did freely make their vvay,
Euen to the chamber vvhere proud Pharaoh lay.

A number plagues the Lord did further threaten,
His Land vvas ſtrooken vvith a darkeſome feare,
His graſſe and corne by Graſhoppers vvere eaten,
The plague deſtroied his people euery vvhere:
And laſt himſelfe amidſt his army crowned,
Was in a moment in the red ſea drowned.

Yet through theſe ſeas his hand did make the way,
Where all his ſeruants went and wet no foote,
Which proues, his loue was his elected ſtay,
While rebell hearts were torne vp by the roote:
Which true example to the world may proue,
The glorious greatnes of his power and loue.

Goliah boaſted greatly of his ſtrength,
Yet little Dauid kild him with a ſtone,
The Madian Hoaſt was ſtrong, but yet at length,
By Gideons hand the kings were ouerthrowne:
By change of tongues fell Babylons high tower,
And Chriſt his word did breake the diuels power.

Yet in it ſelfe what weaker is than water,
Which drownd proud Pharao with his mighty hoſt?
A lowſe or flie is of a little matter,
Yet with ſuch vvormes are men tormented moſt.
What ſtrength alas is in a little ſtone?
Yet ſo vve reade Goliah ouerthrowne.

Know then from whence this wonder power groweth
But from the force of the almighty hand,
Which to the vvorld his glorious power ſhoweth,
When vvith the weake the ſtrongeſt cannot ſtand:
King Dauid vvrote, and it is truely knowne,
That power belongeth vnto God alone.

To proue the proweſſe of the heauenly power,
How many more examples may be ſhowne,
There is no yeare, no day, no night, nor houre,
But ſome ſuch action to the vvorld is knowne:
That truth may vvell vnto his glorie ſpeake,
God is of power, and all the vvorld is weake.

But ſince the vvorld cannot the bookes containe,
Wherein his vvorks of vvonder may be vvrit,
To admiration let his power remaine,
And ſay, All powers are ſubiect vnto it:
And let me of his loue and mercy write,
Which is the ſubſtance of the ſoules delight.

This powerfull Loue, the glorie of all grace,
When he had wrought the world vnto his will,
And planted each thing in his proper place,
And in the course that they continue still:
Of all the workes that he in wonder wrought,
Made onely man the deareſt of his thought.

For what he made he made but man to ſerue,
And man to ſerue his onely ſacred loue,
And in his loue doth ſo mans life preſerue,
As may the comfort of his care approue:
And ſo approue as may this ſentence giue,
His onely loue doth make the ſoule to liue.

He loued the earth when he did giue it life,
He loued the life when he his Image gaue it,
He loued the fleſh that made the bone a wife,
He loued the ſoule when he from death did ſaue it:
He loued him euer, yet he loued him moſt,
To fetch him home when he himſelfe had loſt.

Come Poets, ye that fill the world with fanſies,
Whoſe fayning Muſes ſhew but madding fits,
Which all too ſoone do fall into thoſe franzies,
That are begotten by miſtaking vvits:
Lay downe your liues, compare your loue vvith mine,
And ſay whoſe vertue is the true diuine.

For further triall let me giue you leaue,
To adde a trueth vnto your idle ſtories,
Wherevvith ſo oft you do the vvorld deceaue,
And gaine your ſelues but ill conceited glories,
Yet when you ſee vvhere ſweeteſt ſights are ſhowne,
Looke on my Loue, and bluſh to ſee your owne.

With ſunny beauties let your loues be bleſt,
The ſunne doth fetch his light but from my Loue,
You haue your wonders from the Phœnix neſt,
Mine honour liues but in the heauens aboue.
Your Muſes do your Ladies praiſes ſing,
The Angels ſing in glory of my King.

The

The earth alas, from whence your loues receiue
Their floures & sweets, their pearls & pretius stones,
To decke themselues, with which they do deceiue
The blinded spirites of the simple ones:
This earth from whence their outward graces spring,
Is but the footestoole of my heauenly King.

And if he so hath deckt the earth belovv,
Imagine then the glory of his seate,
Which may persvvade where Angels tremble so,
For humane eies the glory is too great:
For vvhere the sun, the moone, and stars haue light,
For natures eies the Beauty is too bright.

And vvho doth liue that euer ye did loue,
But that ye could their faireſt faire vnfolde?
And my faire loue, let faireſt truth approue,
No eie can liue, in glory to behold:
Your cleareſt beauty is vvith age declining,
My Loues bright glory is for euer shining.

If you be vvise, thinke vvhere true wisedome liueth,
And then allovv the honour to my loue:
If yours be kinde, thinke vvho the comfort giueth,
And knovv the turkey from the turtle doue:
If constant yours, that truth let my loue trie,
Who loſt his life, to saue his loue thereby.

And let me see, hovv liueth all your loue,
But on desert the stay of all your state,
And in my Loue a further life approue,
Who lou de indeede vvhen he had cause to hate:
Your fancies oft for lacke of fauour starue,
But my Loue doth both mine and yours preserue.

Then truly say whom chiefe your loues doe chuse,
To caſt the countenance of their fauours on,
Then vvhom againe they vvholy do refuse,
In liking thought as moſt to looke vpon:
Then do but looke vpon my loue his choice,
And vvhose heart moſt he maketh to reioyce.

The vvealthy, mighty, vvise and vvell at ease,
Doe fit the fansies of your Ladies best:
But poore, and vveake, and simple soules best please,
My heauenly Loue, to labour in his brest:
And vvho the world doth vtterly refuse,
Those doth my Loue vnto his fauour chuse.

And see vvhat power is in your louing natures,
To take or giue vvhat ye may gaine or lose,
And ye shall see they are but my loues creatures,
Whose liues are at his pleasure to dispose:
And vvhile your fauours all doe fade away,
My sweete Loues blessings neuer vvill decay.

Could ye conceiue the smallest of the sweete,
That doth discend from my soules dearest Loue,
Vpon the faith that falleth at his feete,
That doth in prayer but his mercy proue:
And you vvill blot out euery idle line,
And yeeld your soules vnto this Loue of mine.

Compare a vveede vnto a holsome flower,
A cloudy euening to a sunny daie,
A foggie miste vnto an Aprill shower,
Nouember blaste vnto a bloome of May:
And you shall easily see the difference plaine,
Betwixt my sun-shine and your showers of raine.

Compare meere folly to the finest vvit,
The courcest copper to the purest golde,
The healthfull body with an ague fit,
And set the youthfull age against the old:
The Rauens foule note to Philomelaes voice,
And quickly say, which is the better choice.

Compare foule pride to faire humility,
A kinde discretion to a dogged nature,
The clownish race to true gentility,
A blessed Angell to a curfed creature,
Fauours to frownes, and smiling vnto scowles,
And say the Phœnix - akes all birds but owles.

Compare the earth vnto the heauen on hie,
The ſpirites treaſures vnto fleſhly toies,
The pibble ſtone vnto the Azurde Skie,
The woes of men vnto the Angels ioyes:
The loweſt weakenes vnto the higheſt powers,
Then ſee the difference twixt my loue and yours.

And when you ſee how all ſweete bleſsings grow
But from the ground of my loues liuing grace,
And do againe the imperfection know,
VVherein you doe your fond affection place:
Then all your titles to this truth reſigne,
There is no life, but in this loue of mine.

And giue me leaue to praiſe my princely Loue,
Although my wittes are ſhort of ſuch a worth,
And let my ſpirite in my paſsions proue,
VVhat his high hand in mercy will bring forth:
And write but truth that may be truly proued,
My onely loue, alonely to be loued.

Before all times, al thoughts, al things he was,
And euer is, and will be aye the ſame,
That doth in wonder wonders wonder paſſe,
In Truths high triumph of eternall fame:
VVhere life, and loue, in grace and glory crownd,
Do ſway the Scepter of the heau'ns renownd.

Now what he was, cannot be comprehended,
VVho in himſelfe doth al things comprehend,
And when that all things ſhall be wholy ended,
Himſelfe, his word, his wil ſhal neuer end:
Whoſe gratious life, al glorious loue beginning,
Doth adde all grace, and endleſſe glory winning.

And of his Eſſence, this is al we finde,
A ſpirite fully incomprehenſible,
A louing God, vnto his ſeruants kind,
And in his humane nature ſenſible:
In wiſedomes wonder, knowledge, quinteſſence,
And in that Eſſence higheſt excellence.

The high Creator of al creatures liuing,
The ſweet Redeemer of his ſeruants loſt.
The glorious grace, all grace and glory giuing,
The ioy of ioyes, that glads the ſpirit moſt:
The loue of life, and life of loue indeed,
Gainſt death and hell, that ſtandes the ſoule in ſteed.

His ſeate is heauen, the earth his footſtoole is,
His chiefeſt dwelling with his ſoules elected.
His ioy to loue, and to be lou'd of his,
His fauour, life, vnto his loues affected:
His word is truth, which doth the ſpirit try,
Where fruitfull faith ſhall liue, and neuer die.

His bleſſing is the peace of conſcience,
His comfort mercies contemplation,
His pretious gift, the ſpirites patience,
His mercy, vertues meditation:
His grace the oyle, that kils the ſpirits euill,
His death the life, that did ſubdue the deuill.

His garments are the ſundry ſortes of graces,
His tribute is but ſinners ſacrifice,
His worke, the planting vertues in their places,
His gaine, the loue of humble ſpirits ſeruice:
His muſicke Pſalmes, that angels neuer ceaſe
To ſing in glory of the King of Peace.

This King of peace, this God of life and loue,
Who in himſelfe doth al, and only holde,
The higheſt bleſſings of the hearts behoue,
That faithfull truth hath to the ſpirit tolde:
This is the ſubſtance of my ſoules delight,
Vnworthy ſubiect of his worth to write.

Yet as his mercy will vouchſafe me grace,
With interceſsion of his high aſsiſtance,
Againſt the power that would my thoughts deface,
And proudly make againſt the ſoule reſiſtance:
I will a little giue his loue a tuch,
Whoſe ſmalleſt praiſe is for my penne too much.

What loue was that which made him like man best,
Of all the workes that euer he created,
What loue againe did in that liking rest,
To loue him so he neuer can be hated:
What loue was more to giue the man a wife,
What loue was most to die to giue him life.

The earth within with siluer gemmes and gold,
Without with trees and herbs, and fruits and flowers,
The waters deepe where fishes keepe their hold,
The Elements with all their inward powers:
These hath my Loue all made for man to chuse,
And to his pleasure in his seruice vse.

The fire was made to kill the chilling cold,
The water made to slacke the burning heate,
The subtile ayre a secret breath to hold,
The earth to drie when moisture is too great:
These crosse in natures yet doe meete in one,
Onely to serue the vse of man alone.

Each bird, each beast, each foule, and euery fish,
The flesh of man must serue to cloath and feede,
What eye can see, or heart of man can wish,
But some way serues to stand poore men in steede:
And for that cause their being first began,
From mercies Loue, to serue the life of man.

The light was made to glad the lightsome eie,
The sound to please the pure attentiue eare,
The aire to drawe a liuing breath thereby,
The earth, the body, and the limmes to beare:
The clouds, the stars, the sunne, the moone, the Skie,
Were made for man, to make him looke on high.

All these were made out of the mould of Loue:
Was neuer Loue came euer neere to this,
Which doth a wonder in affection proue,
Euen when we least deseru'de the loue of his:
For when our soules did most offences do him,
He came himselfe in loue to call vs to him,

To

To make, redeeme, preſerue, defend, and cheriſh,
His faithfull ſoules, and ſo in loue to nouriſh,
As in his loue, their liues ſhall neuer periſh,
But like the Lilly liue and euer flouriſh:
Are theſe not points ſufficient to approue,
The true affection of a piereleſſe Loue?

Yet more to ſay, that truely may be ſaid,
In humble honour of this heauenly Loue,
In mercies ſweete to make the ſoule diſmaide,
To ſee the bleſſing of his God aboue:
The louing ſpirit liuely to refreſh,
He let his ſeruants ſee him in the fleſh.

To ſee him ſo, as might not hurt their ſight,
For none might ſee his high ſupernall power,
But in his loue to ſee that glorious light,
That gaines that ſweete that cuts off euery ſowre
The ſecond perſon of himſelfe, his ſonne,
In whom are all things to his glory done.

And ſee the cauſe why ſo he came vnto vs,
His onely loue the onely cauſe we liue,
And when we came, what comfort did he doe vs,
To ſaue our liues, his Loue his life did giue:
And ſo to ſaue vs from the fire of hell,
That with his Loue we might for euer dwell.

What Loue was this, to leaue his heauenly ſeate
Among his angels, all in glory ſerued,
To come to man who did too ill intreate
The ſacred Loue, that hath his life preſerued,
From being honoured, praiſde and glorifide,
To be diſgraced, whipte, and crucifide.

In loue he left his higheſt heauenly pleaſures,
Aboue his Angels in their heapes of ioyes,
To liue on earth in ſorrowes out of meaſures,
With change of nothing but the worlds annoies:
In toile and trauell, long in loue he ſought vs,
And with his death at laſt full dearely bought vs.

Oh woful trauaile that he vndertooke.
To bring our liues vnto his sacred loue,
Which paine, nor crosse, nor death it selfe forsooke,
That to our faith might his affection proue:
Which left the spirite of his loue behinde him,
To shew the loue that seekes him, how to finde him.

In loue he came, that he might comfort doe vs,
In loue went from vs, to prouide our places,
In loue he sent his comforter vnto vs,
In loue he guides vs with his holy graces:
In loue he made, bought, keepes and guides vs thus,
And shal not we loue him that so loued vs?

Yes my deare Lord, be thou my dearest loue,
For Christ his sake, let my soule neuer leaue thee,
Who in thy loue, thy liuing truth doth proue,
That makes me find the world doth all deceiue me:
And were there truth on earth as there is none,
Yet were thy loue the ioy of life alone.

And let these teares be witnes of my loue,
Which first do begge remission of my sinne,
And in repentance do but mercy moue,
To ope the gates of grace and let me in:
VVhere humble faith but at thy feete may fall,
VVith my soules seruice, loue, and life, and all.

Forget O Lord, my workes of wickednes,
VVhereby my soule with sorrow is oppressed,
And with the finger of thy holines,
In mercy touch my spirit so distressed:
And saue my life that draweth nigh to hel,
Loue me a little, and I shal be wel.

Loue? no sweete Lord: mercie I craue no more,
My sinnes are such, I dare not speake of loue,
But in thy mercie, to thy loue restore
My humble faith, that may but mercie proue:
And so approue, that al the world may see,
The ioyful loue betwixt my God and mee.

Oh

Oh call me home, and make me heare thy call,
And heare thee so, that I may runne vnto thee,
And hold me fast that I may neuer fall,
But that my soule may euer seruice do thee:
Shew some good token, that the world may know,
My soule is blest, whom thou hast loued so.

And while I liue here in this wretched vale,
Of feareful danger of infernal death,
Where earthly pleasures take those soules to sale,
VVhich haue their bargaine in the hel beneath:
Let my soules loue, and life, and labour be,
To seeke my ioy, my loue, and life in thee.

Make me not rich lest I forget to thinke,
From whence I haue the comfort of my hart,
Nor in such want, let thy poore seruant sinke,
That I be driuen to craue the needy part:
Giue me but meanes the needie to relieue,
To feede thy flocke, and not the wolfe to grieue.

Let me not listen to the sinners songs,
But to the Psalmes thy holy saints do sing,
Nor let me solow tyrants in their wrongs,
But kisse the rocke where righteousnes doth spring:
Let not mine eye affect the outward part,
But let me loue the vertue of the hart.

And let my loue be, to behold thy loue,
And let my loue be, but to liue in thee,
And so to liue, that al the world may proue,
The gracious good my God hath done for me:
To call my soule out of this world of woe,
In faithful loue to serue my Sauiour so.

And when they see the blot of al their blame,
To loue the world, but al in wretched toyes,
And do confesse with inward blushing shame,
They are but sorrowes vnto heauenly ioyes:
They may with me forsake al worldly pleasure,
And make thy loue an euerlasting treasure.

For

For Lord by thee we are, in thee we liue,
And in thy loue the liuing cannot die,
And since thy death did our liues wholy giue,
For thy loues sake shall we affection flie?
No my deare Lord, let life be death to me,
So I may die to liue in loue with thee.

A ioyfull life were such a death indeede,
From earthly paine to passe to heauenly pleasure,
A ioyfull line for louing hearts to reade,
To leaue the flesh, to take the spirits treasure:
Whose glorious sence vnto the sunne doth fall,
That all is nothing to that all in all.

And I (alas) of many thousand soules,
Vnworthie most of his high worth to write,
Who in his mercies true record inrowles
The leuing substance of the soules delight,
Must mercie crie, for feare my loues presuming
Of too high sence, may be my soules consuming.

And with the teares of true repentant loue,
Looking vppon the wonders of that wonder,
That in his least perfection may approue
The greatest wisdome of the world put vnder
Confesse my wit as short to penne his prayse,
As darkest nights in light of clearest dates.

And say but this in grace and glories height,
Where vertues loue doth liue for euer crowned,
And all the Hoast of heauen and heauens await,
Vpon the highest of the heauens renowned:
Whom Saints and Angels trembling do adore,
To him alone be praise for euermore.

All honour praise and glory euer bee,
Vnto my louing euerlasting King,
This King of life who so hath loued me,
To giue my soule this grarious power to sing:
In heart and minde, in man and Angels loue,
All glorious glory be to God aboue.

FINIS. *Nicholas Briton.*